

Madam Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring the life of Malcolm Dudley, a great and good man who was a true patriot, and in extending our condolences to his wife and his entire family. His was a life well-lived, one filled with generosity, public service and care for others. He bettered our community and strengthened our country.

HONORING OUR PRISONER OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION HEROES

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the sacrifices made by American men and women in uniform today and throughout our nation's history. We should each take a moment to recognize the enormous loss of Americans who leave their homes and families to serve their nation, and whose fates are unknown—some captured and listed as prisoners of war, while many others are listed as missing in action. Their families endure tremendous grief and pain, knowing that their loved one's story may never be revealed and that they may never be laid to rest.

Current estimates of American servicemembers who are unaccounted for number over 80,000. The vast majority of these are from conflicts decades ago, and answers continue to elude us. We must continue our efforts to make sure that all American servicemembers listed as POW or MIA are returned and that we continue to remember and venerate those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in war.

I want to commend the efforts of Gene Spanos, a constituent of the 9th Congressional District, who has spent a great deal of time and energy contributing to these efforts. His ongoing missions include, but are not limited to, pushing for recognition of American POWs who died in captivity during the Korean War, advocating for greater United Nations support of POW-MIA recognition efforts, ensuring that potential MIA servicemember gravesites are included in the Master Excavation listings country by country. The efforts of Mr. Spanos and so many dedicated individuals around the country are ensuring that we continue to move forward on this critical issue. Madam Speaker, I commend the work of my constituent Gene Spanos and his counterparts who are dedicating their time and passion to these efforts.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably absent for votes on March 16, 2021. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 78, NAY on Roll Call No. 79, YEA on Roll Call No. 80, and YEA on Roll Call No. 81.

VOCA FIX TO SUSTAIN THE CRIME VICTIMS FUND ACT OF 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1652, or the "VOCA Fix Act of 2021," a critical piece of legislation designed to curtail and prevent future cuts to an already diminished federal victim service grants program.

This legislation must pass, because VOCA grants provide compensation to victims of crime at critical moments of desperate need.

VOCA funds could help compensate the only surviving victim of Robert Lee Haskell who, driven by vengeance, fatally shot six members of his exwife's family in Texas, including four children.

The survivor of Haskell's rampage, a girl of only fifteen, was shot in the head and only survived by playing dead.

VOCA funds could help compensate the wife and two children of a man killed in a home intrusion in Harris County, Texas, after an intruder entered the family's home, ordered the wife and children to lock themselves into a room, and then proceeded to shoot their husband and father.

VOCA funds could help compensate a woman who was abducted in Houston and forced to drive to an ATM at gunpoint, where she withdrew cash to give to her abductors.

VOCA funds could help compensate innumerable victims and survivors of federal crimes, but only if we pass this legislation.

VOCA grants have been vital in their support of traditional victim service providers across the nation, particularly for those organizations serving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, trafficking, and drunk driving.

VOCA grants also fund victim compensation, which helps survivors pay medical bills, missed wages, and in the most severe cases, funeral costs.

However, the "federal grants used to support victim services through VOCA have decreased significantly over the past several years.

Further drastic cuts to VOCA funding are expected, as the non-taxpayerfunded pool from which these grants originate, the Crime Victims Fund, is running dry.

The Crime Victims Fund serves as an example of true justice, because the money used to support victims comes not from taxpayer dollars but rather from the criminal fines and penalties paid by federally convicted offenders.

The Crime Victims Fund has shrunk rapidly in recent years and continues to decline, because rather than prosecuting cases, the Department of Justice increasingly settles cases through deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements, and the monetary penalties associated with these agreements are deposited into the Treasury rather than the Crime Victims Fund.

These agreements deny funding to victim services, which is contrary to the spirit of VOCA: monetary penalties from crimes should go to serve victims of crimes.

The crimes from which these penalties are derived are the same, whether they are pros-

ecuted or settled, and the funding should be going to serve victims.

The VOCA Fix Act of 2021 fixes this by ensuring that monetary penalties associated with deferred and non-prosecution agreements go into the Crime Victims Fund instead of into the Treasury.

This simple fix will prevent future funding cuts that jeopardize programs' abilities to serve their communities and will help address the many growing and unmet needs of victims and survivors, including survivors of domestic violence.

This legislation not only recognizes that it is the victims of crime that bear the brunt of the drastic cuts being made, but also that we must protect those victims that have the courage to come forward and work together with the authorities to bring justice to their offenders.

Victims who cooperate with authorities often fear for their own safety and face pain at revisited trauma, and this legislation recognizes that rather than putting victims in further danger, we create for them a safe environment—both physically and emotionally.

Victims may be intimidated by law enforcement or other government agencies, but if we want victims to fully and freely cooperate with the authorities, we must ensure that victims feel protected and that there is no risk of becoming retraumatized.

We must also make sure that if victims cooperate with authorities, then measures to ensure the safety of victims will be provided in our government agencies working in tandem with victim service providers.

Tomorrow, the House will vote on H.R. 1620, which will reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994.

We are doing so because we recognize the urgency and dire need faced by the victims and survivors throughout this country during a significant moment of ongoing domestic violence caused by this pandemic and experienced by both women and men.

Although local victim services agencies are there to help, they are facing record numbers of clients as well as the economic consequences of the pandemic.

Without the VOCA Fix Act of 2021, survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault will inevitably lose access to victim support services, leaving victims and survivors without options for safety and vulnerable to further victimization.

Madam Speaker, the time is now to deliver access to the services victims and survivors so desperately need during a critical moment when the need for victim assistance has skyrocketed and programs are being forced to cut lifesaving services for victims.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.